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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews theoretical writings on the importance and function of imaginative play in the development of young children, and describes measurement instruments and instructional aids used for imaginative play in home and school settings. A historical summary of the function of play in the young child's life is presented. Early theories saw play as a way of dispelling physical or emotional energy, or as a socializing agent that prepared children for their adult roles. Recent research has stressed the importance of play as a process of mental representation and social collaboration, giving play an important role in learning and language development. The role playing element of imaginative play is described as a key to intellectual growth. A review of the literature includes discussion of the work of Curry and Arnaud, Singer, Neumann, Yawkey and Blohm. Particular reference is made to the Singer Interview for Imaginative Play and the Language and Imaginative Play Experience Approach (LIPEA). Imaginative play is analyzed from four viewpoints; (1) educational, (2) cause and effect; (3) child developmental, and (4) creative communicational models. The roles of objects, actions, and situations in setting the scope and content of make believe play are discussed as an aspect shared by all viewpoints. (SB)

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Imaginative Play of the Young Child in Home and School Settings

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Imaginative Play of the Young Child in Home and School Settings

Introduction

Play in its various forms (Peller, 1952)--onlooker, solitary, parallel, dramatic, and socio-dramatic have been subjects of artistic endeavors, narratives, poems, and theoretical models for school learning and developmental growth since the dawn of civilization and recorded history (Klinger, 1971; Neuman, 1973; and Singer, 1973).

Paintings depicting types of children's games played during the Chinese dynasties (Singer, 1973), the writings of Plato (Cited in Windelbrand, 1958) showing the importance of play as a curriculum vehicle for school learning, the description and use of play objects, Gifts, by the "Apostle of Play," Frederich Frobel (1900), and the explicit narrative of Rousseau's (Nine) Emile, describe play and childhood play experiences. Gleaned from passages written by Shakespeare, there is evidence of some sensitivity toward dramatic and socio-dramatic play of young children. Robert Louis Stevenson (1923) highlighted make-believe playmates in "The Brownies;" and Mark Twain (1971) in Huckleberry Finn provided detailed descriptions of imaginary friends and pretend situations involving pirates and riverboat captains. In the 1940's and 1950's, a cartoon character, "Baraby," had a make-believe leprechaun-friend, Mr. O'Malley, who displayed super magical powers. The popular cartoon strip also showed groups of children in various socio-dramatic play situations. Currently, in the cartoon capers of "Peanuts," Snoopy, the daydreamer, frequently challenges the sinister Red Baron and through imaginative make-believe tells of air duals between the two.

Not only does play appear in artistic ventures, narratives, poems and documents written by the historical philosophers, play also has been the subject of numrous theories of child development and education for centuries. Frederick Schiller (1954) and Herbert Spencer (1897) developed the Surplus Energy Theory of play which hypothesized that play was actually residual energy derived from the organism's finite energy minus the energy used in the struggle for survival. Gross (1901), a German theoretican, proposed in his "Instinct" or "Practice-Preparation" Theory that play during childhood built into the adult certain types of behaviors essential for later living and learning. The "Relaxation Theory" developed by Lazarus (1888) and Patrick (1914) explained play as "deficient energy" or as a"disipator of inhibitions" that result from fatigue. Sigmund Freud (1959) saw play as a way to "satisfy drives partially or to resolve conflicts in the absence of a realistic opportunity to do so (Singer, 1973, p. 12)." As manifestations of psychological difficulties, ego conflict, and personality dissonance, fantasy play was important as a psycholoanaytic vehicle to work through these problems in context of the basic tenant that " . . . a happy person never phantasies, only an unsatisfied one (Freud, 1959, p. 146)." Jean Piaget (1962), a famous Swiss psychologist, has currently formulated a theory of play that is intertwined with and a requisite to continued cognitive growth and intellectual development of the young child in the formative years.

Peronal recollections of the adult's childhood years also provides evidence of play. Recalling particular childhood games like "Buck-Buck," "Jacks," "Playing House," and remembering past

imaginary playmates in the form of make-believe animals and people, or favorite play objects such as dolls or toys, play experiences for adults come alive. Through reminiscense about personal experiences at play or current observations of young children in play situations, evidences of play . . . past and present . . . can be abstracted.

Of the particular types of play, the dramatic and socio-dramatic forms have been given increasing attention in research investigations and from child development and educational specialists. Dramatic and socio-dramatic play, often called fantasy or imaginative play, have been differentiated by Smilansky (1968). Smilansky notes that:

> In dramatic play, the child takes on a role: he pretends to be someone else. He imitates the person in action and speech, with the aid of real or imagined objects. The play becomes socio-dramatic if the theme is elaborated in cooperation with at least one other role player; then the participants interact with each other both in action and verbally (p. 7).

Regardless of the differentiation between the forms of imaginative play, it contains an imitative element which is reality-centered and an 'as if' element which is of the "let's pretend" and "make-believe" variety. With the imitative and imaginative elements fundamental to dramatic and socio-dramatic play, child development and educational theorists, such as Freyburg (1973), Leiberman (1965), Nicholich (1975), Piaget (1962), Smilansky (1968), Wolfgang (1974), and other note that through imaginative play, the child broadens his world and helps him enter the world of adults. Smilansky (1968, p. 61) adds:

> Children who customarily engage in socio-dramatic play that affords them the opportunity of playing at life and gives them a greater understanding of it are better prepared and more readily integrated into the real life patterns of their immediate environments at an earlier age than children who do not engage, or very little, in socio-dramatic play.

Research findings stress that particular import is given to imaginative play as a process of mental representation, and as such, is closely linked to evolving thought processes and language--both oral and written. Simply stated, children in imaginative play episodes actually express thoughts. They can also communicate these thoughts to other children. For example, young children engaged in imaginative play by using objects "as if" they were other objects and by role playing situations such as "Mommies" and "Daddies" or "Going to the Doctor" employ and expand upon mental or symbolic representations in fantasy play. Nicolich's (1975, p. 28) research shows that "the development of the symbolic function through imitation, symbolic play, and mental images prepares the way for linking verbal elements to reality."

The relationship of play to mental representation is the foundation for relating make-believe play and learning (Pulaski, 1971).

> Make-believe play permits the child to explore and gain mastery over the environment of objects and ideas, and at the same time, allows the child to become the chief actor, observer, and participator (Blohm & Yawkey, 1977, p. 4).

The objects and actions used in play and the situations, themselves, serve as an opportunity for the child to:

> re-live symbolically his(her) own life in order to assimilate more easily its various aspects as well as to resolve daily conflicts and realize unsatisfied drives (Piaget, 1972, p. 107).

According to Piaget, the development of imaginative play and construction of logical through depends not only upon the child's

involvement with objects and ideas but also on his social collaboration with other children. During an imaginative play episode, the child becomes "immersed in a sea of words which defines and relates his social behaviors and his physical activities (Richmond, 1970, p. 31)." Through imaginative play, the child begins to see his relationship to others as reciprocal rather than undimensional; he begins to see himself and the environment around him from other points of view.

> In fact, it is precisely by a constant interchange of thought with others that we are able to decentralize ourselves in the way, to co-ordinate internal relationships deriving from different viewpoints... (Piaget, 1967, p. 164).

The more the child in context of a group becomes involved in imaginative play and relies upon language in play activities, "the more he orientates his mental model of the environment (Richmond, 1970, p. 36)." According to Richmond (1970, p. 36), the change occurs in two ways:

1. he orders and relates his representations more in accord with the conceptual nature of the language; and,
2. he begins to rearrange his representations to allow for the relativity and plurality of viewpoints which social interaction forces upon him.

Smilansky (1968, p. 12-15) provides some additional generalizations concerning mental representation and social collaboration through imaginative play.

1. In socio-dramatic play the child learns to gather scattered experiences and to create out of them a new combination.
2. The child learns to concentrate around a given theme.
3. The child learns to discipline his own actions in relation to a context.
4. The child develops from a predominantly egocentric being

capable of cooperation and social interaction.

5. The child learns to develop toward advanced stages of abstract thought.

6. The child learns vicariously from the experience and knowledge of other children.

Play and its various forms have the potential for meaningful learning and development in school curriculum. By reducing the heavy emphasis upon fact and rote memory as Featherstone (1967), Deardon (1968), Kohlberg (1968), Weber (1971) and critics of school curriculum suggest, more time could be alloted to exploring, discovering, and problem solving using indirect and direct guidance in and through play (Hildebrand, 1975). Imaginative play appears to contribute to cognitive functioning of the child in other ways. In imaginative play, the role playing element is key to intellectual growth. The role playing element observed in imaginative play as defined by Curry and Arnaud (1974) is:

> . . . when the child transforms himself in pretend play to be a person or object rather than himself, as indicated by his verbal and/or motoric enactment of his perception of that role (p. 27).

Specifically the role playing may be analyzed along several overlappping but developmental sequences. Curry and Arnaud (1974) view these sequences of role play in make-believe as:

1. symbolic elaboration of the role
2. thematic content
3. integration of affect and intellect
4. distinction between reality and fantasy
5. modes of interpersonal transaction

Symbolic elaboration of the role refers to the manner or style that the child choses in showing his or her conception of

the role being enacted (Curry & Arnaud, 1974). Basic imitation of actions acquired through the child's day to day living experiences is the foundation of symbolic elaboration. Basic and concrete imitation facilitates and develops mental representation and abstract thinking. Then too, symbolic elaboration as it relates to mental representation shows the child's current levels of intellectual growth through three key aspects of role taking. The aspects are: (1) the child's perception of the role, (2) modes of enacting the role; and, (3) medium of expression (Curry & Arnaud, 1974).

The child's perception of the role refers to the growth of thinking from concrete to abstract levels. At the higher level, abstract thinking requires the ability to cognize in general terms.

For the young child in the early preschool years, "meowing" like a cat for example is quite useful and sufficient for playing the role of the cat. This example is a concrete literal interpretation of only part of the total model. The older preschool child depicts a greater number of aspects of the model in playing a role. These aspects are more accurate, descriptive, and more all encompassing than the role played earlier. When situations within the role occur where the child has had little to no experience he or she will fill in the gaps and supply the details required by the play situations. The child at this age has also developed a great repertoire of models to draw from. From television, observation of significant others, and other experiences, children can use these role models in play situations. The older child in pretending to play the role of the family cat,

for example, may now require "props" like food, and water bowl and develop the role into a series of related and connected scenes depicting aspects of living and eating.

The second factor is "modes of enacting the role." This factor refers to the "hows" of expressing and enacting the role. Here, quality and quantity of expression are directly related to the child's perception of the role. For the young preschooler, the relationships between sensory information taken in " . . . often leads to direct motor discharge (Curry & Arnaud, 1974, p. 274)." For the older preschooler, the response exists but the relationship between sensory information and response is " . . . superseded by some sort of cognitive mediation via language, thought, and imagination which are observed in the child's dramatic play (Curry & Arnaud, 1974, p. 274-275)."

The final factor, medium of expression, refers to objects used to show and demonstrate expressions in play situations. The medium of expression in the young preschooler is self action. For example, in playing the role of a parent, the child uses his whole body to act out features of the role model. In play situations, it could mean pretending to be Mommy by walking, talking, and using other actions from the role model portrayed, The older preschooler now moves from self action to toy action as the medium of expression. Rather than demonstrating the direct imitative actions of the model, the child uses objects and situations. "The older preschool child can be a certain distance between his internal play self and the play activity... (Curry & Arnaud, 1974, p. 275)."

The second sequence, called thematic content, as described by Curry and Arnaud (1974) refers to:

> ... the basic thrust or nature of the behaviors portrayed in association with the specific role, and in socio-dramatic play, the nature of the interactions among the role players (p. 275).

Basically, the thematic content is related to the social and emotional concerns of a particular group of children. These concerns may be immediate and momentary or may reappear in several episodes over a duration of time. For the young preschooler, the the thematic content typically describes and portrays family models and significant others. The older preschooler most often uses models in role play based upon experiences outside the family and through vicarous experiences.

The third developmental aspect basic to role play is labeled the integration of affect and intellect. The integration of affect and intellect, developmentally speaking, proceeds from a direct channelling and displacement of emotional-social behaviors to the increasing use of mediational processes shown through use of words and symbolic representations. The young preschooler is thinly disguised and vents feelings and emotions directly in role playing people, animals or demonstrating actions. The older preschooler displaces agression in socially accepted ways. Here, "good" or "bad" guys, sheriffs, doctors, or parents perform acts and deeds in socially accepted and legimate ways.

Distinguishing between reality and fantasy, the fourth sequence, refers to recognizing the difference between what is imagined and what is real. Young preschoolers loose themselves

in the role. These children actually become the objects they are playing. The older preschooler maintains distance between imagined and real events through "pretend." In this context, older preschoolers show their ability to differentiate between reality and fantasy by using terms such as "pretend," "play-like," or "make-believe" prior to or at the completion of the role taking episode.

The fifth developmental sequence is the "mode of interpersonal transaction." These developmental aspects refer to the growth of egocentric and highly personalized play that focuses only on the child to increasing awareness of relationships and empathy for others that focus on the group. The very young preschooler plays in solitary or parallel fashion. The older preschooler is aware of group membership and defines membership on the basis of who can and who can't play----i.e., on exclusiveness. At a later point in time, the more advanced preschooler uses inclusiveness to form groups ". . . as children perceive that the presence of the children and their ideas serves to enhance, deepen, and extend their own ideas (Curry & Arnaud, 1974, p. 276)."

Imaginative Play: An Analysis

Historically, imaginative play has been viewed from four mainstreams of thought (Neumann, 1973). Succinctly stated, the mainstreams of thought on imaginative play are: (1) educational, (2) cause and effect, (3) child developmental; and (4) creative communicational models.

The educational approach views imaginative play in the context of education programs. The objectives of imaginative

play in light of school and home based programs emphasize acquisition of socio-cultural concepts and skills through the academic disciplines. Imaginative play is used primarily as a vehicle for assisting concept learning and facilitating intellectual, social, and motor growth.

The second mainstream of thought concerning imaginative play focuses in on cause and effect relationships. Viewed as a separate and independent activity that has its own existence, imaginative play behaviors are examined within a total context--i.e., a finite set of behaviors. Numerous theories were then developed to explain the nature of playing behaviors in context of cause and effect relationships. For example, the need for the child to be active, the cause, produced a surplus of energy, the effect, which was then channeled into play. Thus, theorizing was the grand-design of the surplus energy theory of play developed by Spencer (1897) and Schiller (1954). Another example of theorizing about the total nature of play showing cause and effect relationships was called the Relaxation Theory. Patrick (1916) in construct form believed that the cause of play was the need for relaxation generated from work, and the effect, relaxation or recreation, became the "refresher" of physical, mental, social, and motor actions of the individual.

A third mainstream of thought on imaginative play viewed it as an evolving process within the child. This model investigated imaginative play from:

1. the meaning to the child; and,
2. its importance to the development of the individual.

The objectives of imaginative play related to the child and his or her individual level of social, emotional, and cognitive functioning. For example, with Freud (1957), play becomes a means of social-emotional functioning. Play then served the child in:

1. reworking painful experiences of the past to gain understanding and eventual master of himself/herself in the environment; and,
2. providing a means of wishfulfillment in which an individual deprived of particular needs could attain them through make-believe.

Another example is Piaget (1962) who investigated symbolic play as it related to the child's cognitive growth and intellectual functioning. From a cognitive developmental view, the crucial factors are the quality and quantity of the interaction within physical environments and social encounters with others. As the level of interaction increased the level of cognitive functioning increased. Through imaginative play, the child ". . . acts out past and present experiences in order to understand them and in order to operate in his [her] environment (Neumann, 1971, p. 77)."

The fourth mainstream of thought on imaginative play views it as creative expression and functioning. Through imaginative play, creative expression is viewed in context of social-emotional growth as well as cognitive functioning. "Imaginative play implies creativity because it results in novel objects, events, and ideas (Neumann, 1971, p. 119)." Play and creativity are also linked by a common element playfulness - a mental attitude or mode of thinking. In relation to emotional-social growth, imaginative

play as creative expression proceeds from individual to group activity. In context of imaginative play as a mental attitude the focus was on the progression of intellectual operations and modes of play as the child increased in age.

The four mainstreams of throught on imaginative play, although approaching it from varying viewpoints, have many similarities. All the mainstreams of thought view imaginative play as the chief activity of the young child. Although the quality and quantity of imaginative play varies among the mainstreams, it is regarded as an important contributor to learning and to intellectual, social, emotional, and motor growth. Secondly, the mainstreams of thought assume some form of mental representation shown by the 'as if' quality through symbolic elaboration in imaginative play--especially in the older preschooler. Typically, the 'as if' quality through the play episode shows the characteristics of order, exact imitation, collective or group symbolism and verbalization.

Order here refers to the logical sequence or flow of the play episode from beginning to ending. The orderliness of the imaginative play is coherent and approximates a whole. Exact imitation of reality means that the players in episodes and models portrayed have a desire for exactness of detail for objects, actions, and situations. With the characteristic of group symbolism, the players as a collective determine roles assumed and differentiate and adjust them in context of objects, actions, and situations. The characteristics of verbalization refers to its use in imitation of adult speech, use of make-believe, and in the management of

play in the form of commands, statements, inquiries, and explanations. The third similarity among the mainstreams of thought of imaginative play is their reliance on objects, actions, and situations. Although the approaches to imaginative play employ objects, actions, and situations in varying degrees, these three elements set the scope and content for play episodes.

Make-believe in regard to objects. Neumann (1971, p. 156) states that there are several categories of objects in the environment which may be encountered during play. These include, in ascending order of complexity and abstraction, real objects, toys, instructional materials, and multi-purpose materials.

Real objects have a specific identity and purpose for use in the environment. Examples of real objects include household furniture, such as lamp and table; vehicles, such as motorcycle and car; geographical elements, such as valleys and sidewalks; and " . . . plants, animals, food, and clothing (Neumann, 1971, p. 156)."

Toys are actually miniature reproductions of real objects. Though the size is scaled, toys retain the same identity and function of their full-size counterparts, such as a model airplane, stove, and plastic lion.

Instructional materials are objects which are specifically designed to teach concepts, skills, or relationships when used in specific ways. "For example, puzzles are designed to teach spatial relationships (Neumann, 1971, p. 157)." Materials used in the Montessori schools develop concepts of size, color, and weight.

Multi-purpose materials are objects which have no specific identity and function; but rather, are used for the construction

of other objects. These materials include blocks, sand, and water. Additional items include paper, clay, cloth, and other art or construction materials (Neumann, 1991, p. 157). For example, the child may use sand to build a fort, paper to make an airplane, or cloth to make a flag.

Make-believe in regard to actions. Four types of actions may be evidenced during the imaginative play episode. These actions, also in ascending order of complexity and abstraction, are explorative, repetitive, replicative, and transformative (Neumann, 1991, p. 152).

Explorative actions are the most concrete operations the child experiences. These actions of random investigation by manipulation and of fathering information. For example, a child handles every part of a new toy in every way possible to categorize it into his or her experiential background.

The repetitive actions substantiate the gathered information by repeated testing. For example, the childhaving manipulated the newley-given toy sufficiently long enough, concludes that the toy is much like the toys used in the bath tub. It is a toy boat.

Replicative actions include simulating reality by reconstructing reality. The child identifies and uses the object or subject corresponding to its identity and function in reality. For example, the child, having concluded that the newly-given toy is a boat, goes and fills the bath tub with water and places the boat in the tub.

Transformative actions include an extension of the skills and information acquired by means of symbolic or creative use of objects, subjects, or the self (Neumann, 1991, p. 152). During this

action, the child transforms or changes the reality-based identity and function of an object, subject, or the self into a fantasy-based identity and function. For example, the child transforms the toy boat into a race car and runs it along the living room floor.

Make-believe in regard to situations. Two types of situations may be observed during an imaginative play episode. These situations are called dramatic play and socio-dramatic play (Smilansky, 1968, p. 7).

In dramatic play, the child takes the role of, or pretends to be, another person. The role-taking of that other person includes imitation in action and speech with the additional aid of real or imagined objects and subjects. Verbalization of the child during play serves as a substitute for objects, actions, and situations. For example, the child, pretending to be a fireman putting out a fire, imitates the movements of riding on the back of the fire truck, jumping off and pulling the hose toward the burning building, aiming, and pulling the lever on the nozzle to let the water spray out. The child enhances the play by wearing a real or imagined fire hat and coat. Verbal statements also enhance the imitation as the child tries to talk like a fireman, such as, "That fire is really blazing!" and "I must save the mother!"

In socio-dramatic play, the theme of the episode is elaborated in cooperation of at least one other role player (Smilansky, 1968, p. 7). Participants interact with each other both in actions and verbally. Unlike the egocentric imitation and verbalization which

appears in dramatic play, the imitation and verbalization are much more developed. The participants begin to imitate some of adult talk as well as talk to substitute for objects, actions, and situations. Speech has an additional function in socio-dramatic play. "Planning, developing, and maintaining the play" (Smilansky, 1968, p. 8) is done cooperatively before and during the play episode. For example, several children join the child who is pretending to be a fireman. They decide that one should drive the truck, another should hold on to the hook and ladder, and a third should ride on the back of the truck. When the children reach the fire, they change plans a bit when one says, "We don't need two people to pull the hose! You go and hook up the other end of the hose to the fire hydrant. We can use the chair as the fire hydrant."

Imaginative Play in School and Home Settings: Applications

Professional and parent educators in school and home settings are becoming increasingly more interested in one or more of the various aspects of the imaginative play concept. Many are especially interested in methods for obtaining data on the imaginative play dispositions of young children. A highly successful interview technique has been developed by Singer (1973) for determining the quality and quantity of imaginativeness of indivudal children's make-believe play. Other professional and parent educators are specifically interested in a practical model for applying the elements of imaginative play to enhancing children's instruction in the communicative arts. An instructional aids model for learning has been designed by Yawkey and Blohm (1977) which

utilizes imaginative play episodes to serve as direct experiences to provide the framework for developing the communicative language processes through language experience.

Interviewing technique. There are many suggested methods of obtaining data on the imaginative play dispositions of young children. Other than paper and pencil tests and numerous psychoanalytic instruments, amply described elsewhere (Singer, 1973 and Walker, 1973), the interview has been used for this purpose with much reported success (Singer, 1973). However, the use of inventories, interviews, and questionnaires have been criticized for potential bias given that the subject may not be the most appropriate individual to characterize his own behavior. To obtain a greater degree of objectivity with data derived from these types of measurement devices, the use of judges or raters to independently score the protocols and obtain an estimate of interjudge reliability has been well documented (Campbell & Stanley, 1963).

In addition, Singer (1973), in developing and using the "Singer Interview for Imaginative Play" notes that:

> It is often possible to obtain relatively clear reports from them [young children] of their own characteristic tendencies provided that the questions are relatively uncomplicated and that the interviewer shows some sensitivity and skill in throwing out only a limited number of probes to be certain that sufficient data have been obtained (p. 59).

The Singer Interview for Imaginative Play, recommended for use with children over five years of age, has a relatively simple format and contains a set of four major questions. The key questions are (Singer, 1973, p. 59):

1. What is your favorite game? What do you like to play the most?

2. What games do you like to play best when you are all alone? What do you like to do best when you are all alone?

3. Do you ever have pictures in your head? Do you ever see make-believe things with pictures in your mind or think about them? What sort of things?

4. Do you have a make-believe friend? Do you have an animal or toy or make-believe person you talk to or take along with you? Did you ever have one, even though you don't any more?

The administration is individual and each question is given in consecutive fashion. Singer notes that if the response to any of the items is unclear or hesitation occurs, the interviewer should follow the stimulus question by a brief probe. As an additional measure, each stimulus question has been phrased in a number of ways to further insure understanding. In examining the stimulus items for quantity and quality of imaginative play, the first two questions are:

> essentially efforts to clarify the self-reports on play preferences with respect to make-believe elements, with the first question being somewhat more ambiguous than the second and permitting the child to report on games that may be played with other children, whereas the second specifies solitary play (Singer, 1973, p. 60).

Items three and four in the Singer Interview examine other aspects of imaginative play and are more difficult. Question three in inquiring about the existence of "pictures in the mind" requires the subject to identify make-believe play episodes or active fantasies. The fourth question deals with the existence of imaginative playmates. The existence of an imaginative playmate in the early school years, as reported by Schaefer (1969), was one of the few retrospective variables that was associated with creativity in several college populations examined. Although

Singer contends that the questionnaire is in reality a five-point scale, the response per item are judged on whether or not it does display make-believe or fantasy content. Each response is treated and scored in a dichotomous fashion and summed across all items. Thus, the range of scores per subject are 0 (no make-believe) to 4 (high make-believe). Singer (1973, p. 61) notes that ". . . our data suggest that, generally speaking, most children do not answer "yes" to more than two to three items." In interpretation of group scores, Singer recommends ". . . dividing a group of subjects into those yielding a score of 0 to 1 from those yielding a score of 2 or more. . . ." Using this scoring technique with a large number of children, Singer (1973, p. 61) has evidenced ". . . rather clear-cut differences in other evidences of imaginativeness of make-believe play."

There are a number of uses for the "Singer Interview for Imaginative Play Settings" in home and school settings. With the Singer Interview, the educator can determine the individual's preference for types of games and play. Whether or not the types of games and play suggested by the child require group or individual participation can also be noted. That is, "Do the types of activities mentioned by the child suggest solitary or social group play?" The third use deals with solitary play. From the responses to stimulus item number two taken from the Singer Interview, the educator can determine whether or not the student has solitary play preferences and what they are. Fourth, the educator can use the Singer Interview to determine the child's level of mental representation (i.e., perception of the role,

modes of enactment, and medium of expression), thematic content, and modes of interpersonal transaction. Determining the existence of imaginative playmates is the fifth use of the Singer Interview. The creation of make-believe playmates provides an indication of their existence as well as the possible function they serve for the child. The Inventory also serves to establish the kinds of thematic content derived from the child's identification of play-forms, types of activities, and make-believe episodes. In identifying social and emotional concerns important to the child at the moment through thematic content, types of role models used by the child may be established. Additional probing of a child's response to the stimulus items established a seventh possible use of the Inventory. Determining whether or not the individual can distinguish between reality and fantasy through subsequent probes shows the degrees of distance between reality and fantasy through "make-believe." The "Singer Interview for Imaginative Play" is a valuable tool for establishing the nature, quality, and quantity of make-believe dispositions in the young child in home and school settings.

Instructional Aids Model. The Language and Imaginative Play Experience Approach (LIPEA) for language and beginning reading serves as an instructional aid to learning. It combines the extensive research in language experience from the curriculum and instruction field and in imaginative play from child development areas (Yawkey & Blohm, 1977). It provides the professional and parent educator with a procedure for capitalizing on children's spontaneous imaginative play episodes to establish meaningful

direct experiences. These direct experiences, in turn, provide a framwork for developing the four communicative language processes: namely, listening, speaking, writing, and reading (Allen, 1964; and Stauffer, 1970).

The LIPEA has two main phases - observation and language development (Blohm and Yawkey, 1977). The observation phase provides direct experiences fundamental to language development. The educator is also provided with a set of guidelines for observing and then interviewing the children at the end of the play episode. The second phase, language development, uses the direct experiences provided by the observation phase. Through the use of mental representations reinforced by the children's recall, relevant language is developed, used, and practiced for oral reading proficiency (Yawkey & Blohm, 1977). The components of the observation phase are: (1) observing, (2) interviewing, and (3) transcribing. The components of the language development phase are: (1) reading, (2) reviewing, and (3) retyping.

In the observation component, the educator observes for the chief elements of the imaginative play episode: imitative role play and make-believe in regard to objects, actions, and situations. In imaginative role play, the educator notes, mentally or in written form, what persons or objects the children transform themselves into and how their personalities change, such as, "I am Mommy!" (Smilansky, 1968). Observing make-believe in regard to objects, the educator notes that verbal statements or body movements are substituted for real objects. This element, illustrated by the child who states, "I am sawing a log!", substitutes his arm

for a real saw. Observing make-believe in regard to actions or situations, the educator notes that verbal descriptions become substitutes for actions or situations, such as, "Let's pretend that I just scored a touchdown!" The child never even went through the movements of running with a football. By observing and noting these chief elements of imaginative play, the educator is better able to interview the children and transcribe the language they use to describe their play episode (Yawkey & Blohm, 1977).

In the interviewing component of the observation phase, the educator encourages the children to verbalize their roles and to use the language descriptions substituted for role play, objects, actions, and situations. Oral language growth is enhanced and development of mental representation is reinforced. This also serves to enhance each child's ability to interact with what others have to say during the discussion. The educator makes sure that the children describe the play episode coherently and in sequence by helping them to identify which events comprise the beginning, the body, and the ending of the episode.

The children recall and relate what happens in the episode in the transcribing component of the observation phase. As the children offer statements, the educator transcribes their dictation onto the chalkboard, each sentence printed on a separate line (Yawkey & Blohm, 1977). The transcription is exactly recorded, in style and form, as the children relate it. Each child in the group is encouraged to offer at least one statement, reinforcing once more, oral language growth - clarity of ideas, quality of expression, and correctness of language usage.

When the transcribing component of the observation phase is completed, the educator introduces the language development phase of the LIPEA with the reading component. As the educator reads the episode, the children note that their particular speech patterns may be written and read back again. In addition to noting left-to-right patterning and return sweep from one line to the next, the children become aware of word and sentence structures and punctuation. The children then read the play episode together to develop oral reading fluency. Supplemental group-taught skills may be presented in an incidental manner since they reflect the content of dictation (Blohm & Yawkey, 1977). Comprehension skills such as following directions, understanding words in context, summarizing main impressions, and noting outstanding ideas and details, may be developed and enhanced through discussion experiences following the reading. The educator may see opportunities to include practice in identifying word families, blend combinations, and plural forms of spotlighting examplesof each in the children's play episode sentences. At the end of the session, each individual notes words he or she is able to recognize without help. These words are listed for the child and will be used for word study in the individual review component.

The second component, reviewing, is an individual review session. The pupil reads the episode orally to reinforce oral reading fluency. Correction ofpronunciation is offered only as needed. The child and the educator then review the word list derived from the dictated sentences. The child pronounces each word presented in isolation and identifies its meaning in context

of the episode sentences. This aids in expanding the child's personal vocabulary, practicing pronunciations, and noting spelling conventions. Opportunities for individual skill-building appear where weaknesses are indicated in oral recitation and followup discussion. Practice in auditory and visual discrimination, syllabication, silent letters, and other skills may be introduced only where evidence suggests the necessity. The child need not be the victim of didactic instruction in skills he or she already has. Essentially, this procedure frees the child to pursue other areas of language development. The educator may encourage a child to use the premise of the group episode to create a new story, developing the child's ability to organize his or her thoughts, choose from all that might be said, and then illustrate a personal experience orally (or in written form) in a clear and interesting manner. Development of speaking, listening, writing, and reading relationships (i.e., conceptualizing reading as speech that has been written is further enhanced and reinforced through followup activities and projects. Some children may choose to draw pictures which depict scenes from their group play episode while others make scale models of objects or people they portrayed. Still others may choose to dictate or write new stories based on the theme original episode and its vocabulary as their followup activity.

The final component in the language development phase of the LIPEA is the retyping of the groups' imaginative play episode into a more permanent form. Copies of the episode are distributed to the children to keep. Children in each group may choose

to read their episode to friends in other groups and even trade for a different episode to read on their own. A copy of each group's LIPEA episode may be posted on the bulletin board along with related children's followup projects for everyone to see (Blohm & Yawkey, 1977). Then new groups, formed spontaneously as new imaginative play episodes emerge, may be identified to proceed through the LIPEA components.

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